

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of

**Revision of the Commission's
Rules to Ensure Compatibility
with Enhanced 911 Emergency
Calling Systems**

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CC Docket No. 94-102

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To: The Commission

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**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE TEXAS ADVISORY COMMISSION
ON STATE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

**NOW COMES THE TEXAS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON STATE
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS (TX-ACSEC), by and through the Office of the
Attorney General of Texas, and submits these REPLY COMMENTS in response to the
COMMENTS on the Commission's First Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in CC
Docket No. 94-102, Filed January 9, 1995.**

I.

SUMMARY

1. TX-ACSEC appreciates the extent of the efforts that were put into the many comments filed in this docket. This process serves to clarify the difference between what is desired and the practical reality of what is attainable and affordable. It also reveals and highlights the consequences of conflicting goals. Thus, TX-ACSEC has had to reevaluate its position on several issues, as enumerated in the following discussion. However, TX-ACSEC reiterates its previous position in respectfully urging the Commission to maintain flexibility in any rules that are ultimately adopted, and to appreciate the roles that the respective parties play in ensuring effective and reliable 9-1-1 emergency calling systems. As long as state and local funds remain

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the sole support of these systems, authority for decisions as to the level of 9-1-1 service features implemented must also remain at the state and local level.

II.

COMPATIBILITY OF PBX EQUIPMENT WITH 9-1-1 SYSTEMS

2. TX-ACSEC accepts the premise put forth by several commenters that required compatibility should be a function of the installed system rather than an inherent capability of the PBX itself. The requirement should be considered to be satisfied if the system can be made compatible through use of adjunct equipment.

A. 9-1-1 Availability

3. The major issue to be resolved within this category is the subject of labeling of non-compliant equipment. TX-ACSEC finds the comments from several industry sources to be persuasive. Especially persuasive was Northern Telecom's suggestion that, "...typically it is the software, and not the hardware, that determines the capabilities of the equipment."¹ Thus, TX-ACSEC changes its original position to agree that the Commission should not require warning labels for non-compliant equipment, but rather it should require detailed user instructions that explain how the equipment should be used for 9-1-1 Emergency Calling Service in various scenarios. These instructions should clearly show the limitations of the equipment under specific conditions of use.

B. Attendant Notification

4. TX-ACSEC recommends that the Commission clarify the fact that only the capability for notifying a PBX attendant, or other on-premises personnel, would be required. Actual use of

¹ COMMENTS OF NORTHERN TELECOM INC., Summary, page iv.

this feature should be left to the discretion of state and local 9-1-1 authorities.

C. ALI Database Maintenance

5. TX-ACSEC reiterates its position that 9-1-1 authorities should be allowed “read only” access to 9-1-1 databases to ensure their accuracy. In addition, the Commission should recognize the fact that at some time in the future it might no longer be feasible to have ownership of the 9-1-1 database rest only with a local exchange company. TX-ACSEC urges the Commission to include sufficient flexibility in its rules covering the database to allow for changes that might be needed due to increased competition and evolving technology.

D. Implementation Schedule

6. The capability for making the system compatible through use of adjunct equipment exists today, and commercial equipment is available. If the Commission adopts the “installed system” concept for acceptable compliance, TX-ACSEC maintains its support of the Commission’s proposed time line for compliance. If, however, the Commission insists on having the PBX itself provide the necessary functions for enhanced 9-1-1 compatibility, the proposed time line is probably too short.

E. Miscellaneous Issues

7. Several commenters suggested that the Commission should differentiate between “large” and “small” PBX systems in determining what systems must comply with enhanced 9-1-1 compatibility. However, Telident, in its comments,² gives examples where a large PBX might not need to comply, and where it would be absolutely necessary for a small PBX to comply. In addition, it is not obvious just what constitutes “large” and “small”. While TX-ACSEC agrees with the concept that there will be specific situations where full compliance might not be

² COMMENTS OF TELIDENT, INC., page 7.

necessary, it believes that local 9-1-1 officials are in the best position to make that determination. Thus, TX-ACSEC reiterates its position that the Commission should leave this type of decision to state and local authorities.

8. TX-ACSEC does not oppose the suggestion of some commenters that the Commission should consider separating the PBX issues and the wireless issues into two proceedings. It certainly appears that the wireless portion presents far more technical challenges than does the PBX portion. Separating the two subjects might result in an Order covering multi line telephone systems being issued more quickly than the one covering wireless systems.

COMPATIBILITY OF WIRELESS SERVICES WITH ENHANCED 9-1-1

9. TX-ACSEC believes strongly that we must not lose our sense of urgency in providing for compatibility of wireless services with enhanced 9-1-1. However, to successfully achieve that goal, it appears that more work may need to be done to ensure realistic time frames. What is needed now is centralized oversight to build on the results of the JEM process, and to provide a continuation of that process to ensure continued effort and successful completion within a reasonable time frame. In the spirit of cooperation and flexibility, TX-ACSEC urges the Commission to provide the necessary oversight, while also providing a rational balance between cost-effective technology and the legitimate requirements of the public safety community.

10. TX-ACSEC stands ready to cooperate with the Commission and with the industry in the provision of test sites to aid in the development of the necessary technology and standards. With its diversity of terrain, demographics ranging from some of the country's largest cities to vast rural areas, and its almost total 9-1-1 coverage (over 99 percent), Texas represents an ideal area for developmental testing of the effectiveness of emerging 9-1-1 technologies. TX-ACSEC adds to this the expertise and skills necessary to effectively coordinate those testing activities.

A. 9-1-1 Availability

11. TX-ACSEC agrees with several of the commenters that it should be acceptable for mobile subscribers to gain access by dialing 9-1-1 plus the SEND key. Pressing the SEND key is the functional equivalent of taking a wired handset off-hook.

B. 9-1-1 Call Priority

12. While 9-1-1 call priority remains a much needed feature, especially in high-traffic cell sites, it is obvious that the technology required is exceedingly complex, and there are conflicting goals of the public safety and disaster control (NS/EP users) communities that must be resolved. Queue protocols must be developed and agreed upon, and call flow control (throttling) techniques must be perfected. Thus, TX-ACSEC concludes that the proposed one year deadline for providing 9-1-1 call priority may not be realistic, and recommends that the Commission direct and monitor further research and development in this area to ensure that this feature is implemented as rapidly as possible.

C. User Location Information

13. No other aspect of compatibility of wireless services with enhanced 9-1-1 offers nearly as high a level of complex challenges as does user location information. Neither is any other aspect as vitally important. The public safety community needs this capability as rapidly as possible. But, the delivery system must be reliable, the information must be reasonably accurate, and the feature must be affordable, both to the telephone end user and to the 9-1-1 system. TX-ACSEC reluctantly concludes that, in the face of the need to resolve these divergent goals, fixed deadlines may not be appropriate at this time. The three stage approach, with the time lines proposed in the NPRM, seemed prudent at first reading. However, in this era of increasingly scarce resources, while stage one seems to have some merit and seems to be attainable within a

reasonable time frame and cost, stage two does not appear to represent a necessary intermediate step to stage three. Thus, efforts beyond stage one should probably be focused on stage three. TX-ACSEC recommends that the Commission initiate an ongoing oversight of the industry efforts to develop a standardized technology for wireless ALI that provides reasonably accurate physical coordinates.

D. Common Channel Signaling

14. TX-ACSEC believes that its original comments on this subject remain generally on target. However, this area particularly points up the need for recognition of the interdependence of the various features of enhanced 9-1-1, and of the need for interfacing the data from the wireless network into the existing wireline network. TX-ACSEC does not know whether the proposed three-year time line for implementing common channel signaling capabilities is sufficient, or not, but as with most other fixed deadlines, it urges the Commission to retain enough flexibility to provide for unforeseen changes in the evolutionary path.

E. Equipment Labeling

15. As with non-compliant PBX equipment, TX-ACSEC has reached the conclusion that labels on wireless handsets is not the best method of educating end users as to the limitations of the devices related to 9-1-1 calls. TX-ACSEC recommends that the Commission require detailed user instructions that explain how the equipment should be used for 9-1-1 Emergency Calling Service in various scenarios. These instructions should clearly show the limitations of the equipment under specific conditions of use.

Respectfully submitted,

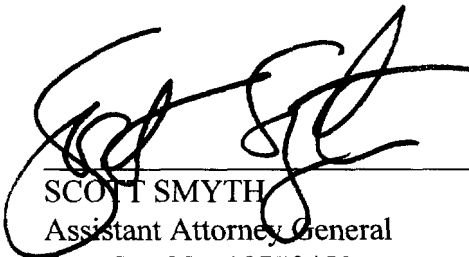
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